NATURAL NEWS

The Field Museum
Exploring
The Earth And Its
People

WEEKLY STAFF NEWSLETTER
January 30, 1998

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

FIELD WEBSITE MAKES "LYCOS TOP 5%" LIST

The Field Museum's Website (which can be visited at http://www.fmnh.org.) has been selected as one of the best sites on the Web by Lycos TOP 5%, the oldest and most prestigious Website directory. Since 1994, Lycos' expert reviewers have scoured the Internet for the finest sites, and not surpisingly, our recently revamped site is honored on the current list. Each site in TOP 5% includes a detailed review describing its editorial and visual merits, and ours should be posted within the next week. Congratulations to **Lori Breslauer, Brad Loetel** (Academic Affairs), and **David Quednau** (Exhibits), who developed the Field's stunning new home on the Web, and a big thank you to Computing staff for their support.

HERPS DIVISION ASSISTS WITH WEB's FIRST TURTLE MUSEUM

As part of a project headed by John B. Iverson (Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana), Sarah Schaack visited the Division of Amphibians and Reptiles during the month of January. Her work here will help with the final stages of a monumental undertaking: mounting the first complete, interactive, international turtle and tortoise museum on the World Wide Web. The K. P. Schmidt Library, located on the ground floor in the Division of Amphibians and Reptiles, and the Field Museum's main library have been extremely helpful in filling in some of the blanks in the locality data collected over the last thirty years. The new turtle website is scheduled to be available for browsing in early 1999.

STAFF MOVIE NIGHTS

Fargo -- February 4
Liar Liar -- February 11
The Rock -- February 18
Phenomenon -- February 25

GRAYBEAL JOINS GOODMAN MACARTHUR PROJECT IN MADAGASCAR

Assistant Curator **Anna Graybeal** traveled to Madagascar recently to participate in a project run by Field Biologist **Steve Goodman** and funded by the MacArthur Foundation to train Malagasy students. During the first week of the trip she stayed in the capitol city of

Antananarivo and taught a course at the University of Antananarivo on population genetics and conservation biology. The focus of the course was "What is the effect of fragmentation on genetic diversity?" Approximately fifteen Malagasy students participated. For the second two weeks of the trip, Graybeal, Goodman and eight students from the course traveled to the Reserve Speciale d'Ambohitantely, located three hours north of Antananarivo in the Malagasy central high plateau. This site used to be continuous forest, but now consists of a large number of forest patches in a matrix of savannah. They set up a base camp at the edge of the largest remaining patch of forest, and spent a total of ten days sampling the small mammal and herpetofauna of five forest patches, ranging in size from 0.64 hectares to aproximately 1200 hectares. They froze and preserved tissue from nearly all the specimens captured, and prepared the specimens using standard protocols. The students were engaged in all aspects of the work, including installation of the traps, checking the traps, opportunistic searching for amphibians and reptiles, and tissuing and preserving specimens. The next phase of the project will involve laboratory work to assess the relationship of habitat patch size to levels of genetic diversity. At least two Malagasy scientists will visit Chicago within the next year to participate in these studies.

DILLON TRACKS EL NIÑO IN CHILE

Curator **Michael Dillon** (Botany), recently returned from six weeks of field and herbarium studies in Chile, supported by a National Science Foundation, SGER grant (Small Grants for Experimental Research) entitled, "Botanical Collecting and Ecological Observations in Coastal South American Deserts during the 1997/98 ENSO event." The funds allow for studies of the highly endemic terrestrial communities called lomas formations in an area that had experienced torrential rains earlier in the year. To augment prior studies, approximately 200 botanical specimens in sets of five to six were collected, including numerous accessions for molecular studies. He took nearly 1000 color photographs to document this unusual event. He presented two formal seminars, one at the Museo Nacional de Historia Natural in Santiago and the other at the Universidad Catolica in Valparíaso. In addition, he gave two newspaper interviews in Santiago that centered on the unique nature of the vegetation of northern Chile and the impact of the current El Niño event. Dillon leaves for coastal Peru in early 1998 for continuing studies on the effects of El Niño.

REESE AWARDED NEH FELLOWSHIP

Adjunct Curator **David S. Reese** (Anthropology) has been awarded a 1998-99 National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship at the W.F. Albright Institute of Archeological Research in Jerusalem. These fellowships are offered in the fields of ancient history, anthropology, archeology, art history, biblical studies, epigraphy, geography, Islamic studies, literature, philosophy, religion, or related disciplines.

The Albright is the oldest American center for ancient Near Eastern studies in the Middle East, founded in 1900. The institute has living accomodations, libraries and laboratories. Reese will spend six months working on archeological material in Jerusalem and elsewhere in Israel. He

THE FIELD MUSEUM
1998 AMENDED STAFF HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Below is a listing of staff holidays for 1998. The list also specifies which days the Museum will be closed to the public. Your actual day off will be determined by where you work (public or non-public area). There are a total of 10 holiday days each year.

DAYS THE MUSEUM WILL BE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC:

Thursday	January 1	New Year's Day
Friday	December 25	Christmas Day

DAYS NON-PUBLIC AREAS OF THE MUSEUM WILL BE CLOSED:

Thursday	January 1	New Year's Day
Monday	January 19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Monday	May 25	Memorial Day
Friday	July 3	Independence Day (day before)
Monday	September 7	Labor Day
Thursday	November 26	Thanksgiving Day
Friday	December 25	Christmas Day
Your Choice	Your Choice	Floating Holiday
Your Choice	Your Choice	Floating Holiday
Your Choice	Your Choice	Floating Holiday

FLOATING HOLIDAYS

This year, we have increased your number of floating holidays to three. This will give you more flexibility in customizing a holiday schedule that fits your needs. The use of your floating holidays requires advance approval by your supervisor/department manager and must be used within the calendar year. You cannot carryover unused holiday time to 1999. When you leave the Museum, you will not be paid for unused holiday time.

TIME SHEETS

When you use your floating holiday, code your time in the "Floating Holiday" section of your time sheet.

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will also be a consultant in the creation of an archeology program in the Department of Biology and Biochemistry at Birzeit University in the West Bank/Palestine.

BIOCHEMISTRY LAB - CALL FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS

Due to increasing demand, we here in the Biochemistry Lab need some lead time to schedule projects for DNA sequencing work for future projects. At this time we are asking anyone who thinks they are going to want to do some DNA sequencing soon to get in touch with us. Slots for 1998 are disappearing quickly, and it's not too early for 1999 either! If you have a project on the horizon, please communicate that to us as soon as possible. If you are in the early stages of starting to plan such a project, it would be mutually beneficial to involve us in your planning. Contact **Lee Weigt,** Biochemistry Lab Manager (x628) with questions, to schedule a meeting, or for a project proposal form.

BENEFITS

REVISED 1998 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Enclosed is a purple sheet with the revised 1998 Holiday Schedule. The Museum will be open on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 26, 1998. Your actual day off will be determined by where you work (public or non-public area). You will still have three floating holidays to use in 1998 as you choose, pending advance approval by your supervisor/department manager.

WEIGHT WATCHERS AT THE FIELD MUSEUM????

We are investigating offering **Weight Watchers** for Field Museum employees right here, at work! The 1-2-3 Success Weight Loss Plan is easy to follow, no complicated calorie counting, you eat your own food and no food is a "no-no." We need a minimum of twenty people to sign up in order to offer the program on-site. If you are interested, please call **Carole Kasarda** (x529). If we have enough interested people, we will schedule a **free information meeting**.

FIELD MUSEUM FAN MAIL

I'd like to commend you upon the beautiful evening [the Staff and Volunteer Holiday Fest in December] you and your committee arranged. It was truly a GALA affair -- very well organized with no long waiting in line for the buffet, which was delicious and attractively presented. To top it all each person was given a gift. Such appreciation on your part encourges the staff and volunteers to extend themselves even more to make our Field Museum the number ONE in the world. -- In appreciation, a Volunteer

FREE TROLLEY SERVICE -- February 7&8 and 14&15

The Mayor's office of Special Events is coordinating the Sixth Annual Winterbreak Festival, January 31 - March 1, 1998, with the objective of highlighting Chicago's cultural treasures. The Shell Oil Company and Chicago Trolley Company will offer a free shuttle service to city points of interest on February 7 & 8 and 14 & 15. There will be four routes making key stops throughout the city. The Field Museum is included in the Cultural South Route. It will depart every hour on the hour on Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday from 12 noon to 6:00 p.m. Other routes are the South Express/Auto Show Route, the North Express and the Shoppers Route. Questions? Call Dan Hines 312/744-7834. -- Submitted by **Fay Levin**

BIKE OR RUN? RESULTS OF STAFF SURVEY

First, thanks to all those who responded to the survey on facilities for running and cycling. A total of sixty-three staff members (roughly 15% of the Museum's full-time staff!) completed the questionnaire, which was posted around the building and appeared in the July 25 *Natural News*.

Respondents listed secure, indoor parking for their bicycles as their top priority, with shower facilities following closely behind. Many used the "additional comments" section to voice their strong support for improvements to the Museum's cycling facilities, citing the Museum's environmental mission and the benefits of cleaner air and improved employee health. The Office of Facility Planning will be reviewing existing bike storage areas. Upgrading of existing showers is a more complex and difficult issue, which will be reviewed in the context of the Capital Plan. Thank you again for taking the time to respond to the survey. We appreciate your participation and will keep you informed of our progress.

Office of Facility Planning and Operations and the ad hoc task force on cycling

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SECURITY CORNER

If your vehicle is supplied with side-impact air bags please use caution when requesting "lock-out" assistance. The Chicago Police Department First District has just informed us that there have been several deaths related to police officers (not in Chicago) attempting to use tools ("slim jim") to open locked doors. Upon sliding the tool inside the door the air bags were discharged and the resulting force was enough to cause serious injury and even death. We have advised our security staff here at the Field Museum to ask individuals requesting "lock out" assistance if the vehicle is equipped with side-impact air bags. If the vehicle is so equipped or if the owner is unsure, our staff will *not* attempt to open the vehicle. We will, of course, provide any other assistance possible (i.e. calling someone to bring another key, contacting a locksmith etc.).

Ron Cundiff

The *Natural News* is edited by **Carolyn Klyce** in the President's Office. The deadline for all submissions -- in WordPerfect on floppy disk or via email to klyce@fmppr.fmnh.org -- is Tuesday at noon.